

# NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *South Carolina Consumer Agency Reports Banner Year for Consumer/Business Funds Recovery*

**Columbia, SC.....** The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) recovered nearly \$2.5 million for South Carolina consumers and saved more than \$90 million for businesses during Fiscal Year 2006-2007, according to end-of-year reports compiled by staff members.

The breakdown by division is as follows:

Consumer Services:	\$1,297,135.30
Legal:	\$1,176,622.89
Advocacy:	Approximately \$90,000,000

Consumer Affairs Administrator Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston credited the Department staff for its ingenuity and diligence in advocating for South Carolinians. "The State of South Carolina benefits from our efficient and dedicated employees who provide valuable services and programs for its citizens," she said. "I am particularly pleased that our staff recognizes that how we do things can be as important as what we do," she explained. "At the Department of Consumer Affairs, there's a belief that creative, responsible risk-taking in the pursuit of improved customer service is an action to be applauded and encouraged."

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#### About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers. Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit [www.sconsumer.gov](http://www.sconsumer.gov).

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SCDCA's Legal Division refunds to consumers were in several general areas, including: Criminal Investigations – Bank/Wire/Odometer turn backs, Compliance Review and Inspection, Credit Counseling, Financial Responsibility – Physical Fitness/Pawnbrokers, and Preneed Funeral Loss Reimbursement.

In addition to the recovery for consumers, the Department's Advocacy Division saved businesses that buy workers compensation insurance roughly \$90 million. This savings occurs on an annual basis as a result of SCDCA's intervention in the request by the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) for increased loss costs as well as its filing for increases in rates for workers compensation insurance that is purchased from the assigned risk pool.

Fiscal Year 2006-2007 was one of SCDCA's most successful for funds recovered/saved for consumers and businesses in areas the Department regulates, enforces, or intervenes. It is surpassed only by 2004, in which the Department reached a \$100 million settlement with Bellsouth on behalf of South Carolina telephone customers. SCDCA no longer intervenes in utility issues.

In the past Fiscal Year, SCDCA handled more than 7,000 complaints, 1,351 of which are still pending. The top complaint categories were vehicle issues, financial institution matters, and debt collection.

For more information on the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs, call the public information division, 803.734.4190 or toll free 800.922.1594, or visit our website:

[www.sconsumer.gov](http://www.sconsumer.gov).

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